



Is Recess Before Lunch A Success in Highline Public Schools?

Schools with Recess Before Lunch (RBL)

Full implementation in all grades

Gregory Heights (**NEW** 2011)

Cedarhurst (**NEW** 2011)

White Center Heights (**NEW** 2012)

McMicken Heights

Parkside

All other elementary schools have implementation in selected grades

Schools Without RBL

Beverly Park

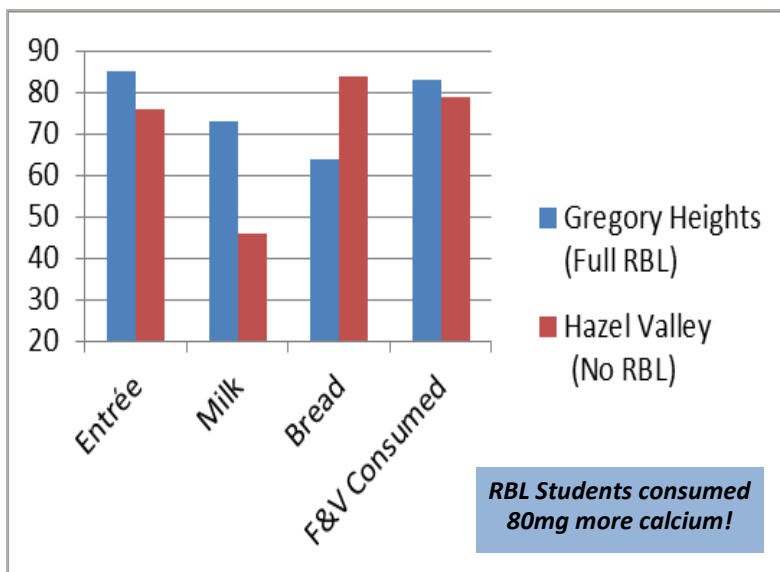
Southern Heights

Hazel Valley

Mount View

"I've observed a positive change in student behavior. It takes kids much less time to settle into their academic tasks!"
-Gregory Hts. Teacher

Lunch & Milk Consumption



Nurses Visits

2010 to 2011

Afternoon Visits in RBL Schools

Cedarhurst - 57%

Gregory Heights - 21%

All schools with partial or no RBL saw an increase in afternoon visits except Southern Hts.

Discipline Referrals

2010 to 2011

Afternoon Discipline Referrals in RBL Schools

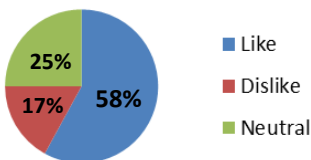
Cedarhurst - 24%

Gregory Heights - 71%

Conclusion: RBL did not appear to reduce serious behavior problems.

Staff Feedback

What is your opinion of RBL?



⇒ **62%** of Teachers noted a positive change in student behavior

⇒ **70%** of Teachers thought students had enough time to eat lunch

Discussion

Our observation of student lunch consumption, comparison of nurses afternoon visits and reports from staff in schools with Recess Before Lunch all show positive support for this policy. Based on this study, we recommend that all Highline Public Schools consider adopting RBL. For more information on this study, please contact:

"There is a huge difference in the amount of clinic visits after lunch. In past years, kids would come to the clinic when it was time to go back to work after recess. This year, they play, then eat, & go to class because they are fulfilled!"
-Cedarhurst Elementary Staff

Advantages Identified by Staff in RBL Survey:

Impact on Lunch Consumption *(25 similar comments)*

- I believe that students are hungrier when going to recess first. I have also seen a lot less food waste.
- Students eat more of their lunch. Students have in the past been in a hurry to eat or toss food to go to recess as soon as possible. Students come in hungry after running outside so they eat more.
- Students are able to focus on eating and will eat most of their lunch.

Impact on Classroom Behavior *(15 similar statements)*

- Students gain learning time; they come in more mellow and ready to learn.
- Any conflicts from the playground don't "follow the child" directly into the classroom and compromise learning time. They can sit and calm and reorganize themselves.
- Students are calmer when they enter the room after having recess and then lunch.

Impact on Recess/Lunchroom Atmosphere *(20 similar comments)*

- There are less playground issues coming back into the classroom, I am able to start instruction right away.
- For the month and a half that we've been doing this, there have been less problems and issues during recess.
- The kids seem more focused on learning and there are less issues from recess being brought into the classroom.

Disadvantages Identified by Staff in RBL Survey:

Supervision & Teachers Time *(12 similar comments)*

- At first the challenge was organization. Now the only thing to be concerned about is the supervision of students once they have finished their lunches.
- Trying to provide supervision is a key hurdle. It would be nice to have some funding to provide extra coverage during lunch.
- Difficult for teachers to get their full 30 duty free lunch.

Lunchroom/Classroom Concerns *(17 similar comments)*

- I have some concerns about sanitation and health...students are not able to thoroughly wash their hands before they eat. There is hand sanitizer available but not all kids use this.
- Some kids don't have enough time to eat their lunch if there is a long lunch line.
- Students complain about being rushed while eating & students go to the bathroom more during class.

Study Methods

Food Waste Observation:

One day observation of school lunch plates & milk consumption. Before & after photos of plates in 4th & 5th grades, matched schools with & without RBL. Gregory Heights (n=33), Hazel Valley (n=45)

Staff Survey:

Surveyed Full RBL Schools: Cedarhurst, Gregory Heights, & White Center Heights
Opinions & experience with RBL (n=73)

Afternoon Nurses Visits Comparison:

Source: Health Office Reports

Sept—Dec. 2010 & Sept—Dec. 2011

Total number of afternoon visits

FULL RBL schools compared to partial & NO RBL schools

Afternoon Discipline Referrals Comparison:

Source: ESIS/SWIS Reports (Sept—Dec. 2010 & Sept—Dec. 2011) Total # of afternoon discipline referrals

NEW FULL RBL schools compared to NO RBL schools